Problems of urbanisation

1806. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the PRIME MINSTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the increasing problems of public health and environmental hazards due to rapid urbanisation in the country; and

(b) if so, what action plan has been taken up so far to cope up with this situation, perticularly in the Mega Cities of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) With a view to developing strategies for critical areas of the urban environment, water supply, sewerage, drainage and sanitation, solid waste management, air pollution and institutional capacity building, studies have recently been conducted jointly by the Ministry of Urban Affairs & Employment and the Ministry of Environment and Forests. A Centrally sponsored scheme of infrastructure development in mega cities has been introduced from 1993-94 with the following financing pattern—25% State Grant: 25% Central Grant: 50% institutional Finance. The scheme assists selected cities with more than 4 million population as per the 1991 census in the development of infrastructure including measures to tackle the problems of public health and environmental hazards.

Wasteland Brought under Cultivation

1807. SHRI V. RAJESHWAR RAO: DR. SHRIKANT RAM CHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the area of wasteland actually put to use and brought under cultivation since the formation of the Department of Wasteland Development in July, 1992;

(b) the fate and present status of the 50 projects which were taken up under the Integrated Wasteland Development Project Scheme in watersheds having predominant non-forest wasteland; and

(c) the future plans and programme of Government for wasteland development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI CHANDRADEO PRASAD VARMA): (a) Since the formation of the Department of Wastelands Development in July, 1992, a total of Rupees 181.67 crores has been released for development of 2.20 lakh ha. wastelands. The Department of Wastelands was created with the mandate to develop wastelands in non-forest area and checking land degradation putting wastelands in the country to sustainable use and increasing bio-mass availability specially fuelwood and fodder. Wastelands are degraded lands which are currently under utilised and deterioting for lack of proper water and soil management on account of natural causes. Therefore, agricultural operations are not possible on such lands at the first stage of development.

The Department of Wastelands have a mandate to develop wastelands rather than to convert wastelands which can be put to use for cultivation.

(b) Under the Integraded Wastelands Development Proejct Scheme, the Department of Wastelands development have so far sanctioned 138 projects. Out of these 138 projects, 3 projects have been completed and the remaining are going-on with a total outlay of Rs. 349.29 crores for taking up development of watersheds having predominant non-forest westelands.

(c) The Department of Wastelands Development is implementing the following schemes:—

(i) Integrated Wastelands Development Project Scheme.